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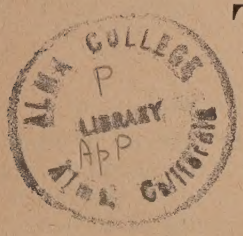

The Mission of the Church

A Sociological Statement

Rev. John L. Thomas, S.J.

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THE mission of the Church today is the same as it has always been. It is the mission of its divine Head, Christ, Who said: "I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) With the coming of Christ, a new power, capable of regenerating and re-creating humanity, was introduced into the world. In Christ, man acquires a new nature, and humanity is offered a new beginning, for by uniting the whole of man, body and soul, sense and spirit, with a higher spiritual principle, Christ makes of man a new creature. Hence, the mission of the Church is essentially a restoration of humanity. Her work is creative and life-giving in the fullest meaning of these terms. Through Christ, she offers to the world a new kind of life which alone is capable of transforming and absorbing into itself the merely human elements, i.e., the physical and psychical forms of life, which exist in man.

This restoring and re-creating mission of the Church implies a concept of human nature which steers a middle path between two profound misconceptions that have dogged the thinking of man down through the ages. Man is not a mere ani-

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mal. He is not a pure spirit. As a composite of body and soul, he is a compound of both. His function in the hierarchy of creation is to stand as a bridge between the world of spirit and the world of sense. These worlds are both real. They are both created by God, and consequently, good. As a composite of body and soul, man is capable of receiving impressions from b o t h worlds. As a rational creature, he is capable of a twofold activity. His fulfillment and development, therefore, consist in the realization of the proper co-ordination of the two elements in his nature.

Furthermore, since he functions as a bridge between two worlds, the lower universe of beings depends on him in a very real sense for its spiritualization. By observing right order in using creatures, he integrates them in the universal order of being intended by the Creator. Hence the re-creating mission of the Church extends to all of creation. By organically reuniting the whole of man with a higher spiritual principle, it restores the broken link in the orderly chain of created beings. Not only are the world of sense and the world of spirit brought into proper co-ordination in man, but as a result of this restoration, creatures are now used as the Creator designed them to be used. Before the restoration, they were abused, so that in the graphic words of Saint Paul, all creation longed for its deliverance. (Romans 8:19-22)

New Life, New Creature

This re-creating of humanity, which is the essential mission of the Church, operates through grace. Man is "born again"; he becomes a "new creature" by sharing in the divine life of Christ. This new life, like all life, gives him a new principle of operation. He becomes capable of supernatural acts. But this new life, although it has been added as a gift and hence, can be separated from his "psychic" or animal life, does not exist as something "along side of" or apart from his human nature. Rather, sanctifying grace elevates, permeates, and "informs" the whole man. In the "new creature," supernatural life completely pervades the natural, although it may be separated from it by serious sin.

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It follows that the life of the Christian acquires a new duality. Not only is he a composite of body and soul, but through sanctifying grace he now shares in the life of two worlds. The one, of which he is most conscious, he knows to be already dying. The other is the "world to come" which is being built up invisibly in the Mystical Body, and in which he already shares through sanctifying grace. Because he has been reborn, the Christian sees no necessary opposition between body and spirit, between Heaven and Earth. He is tempted to embrace neither the Manichaean opposition between the essential evil of matter and the absolute good of spirit, nor the perennial secularist contention that the natural order is all that counts. Rather, he sees that the most meaningful line of distinction must be drawn between unregenerated human nature — man left to himself, and human nature renewed by grace — man sharing in the Divine Nature.

Basic Issue Is Separation

Hence, implicit in the Church's mission today, as it has always been, is the assumption that the basic issue facing man is his separation from God. At the very beginning of its history, the human race was deprived of its participation in the Divine Life by a disorder of the will which sacrificed God to self, and spirit to sense. The effects of this original alienation from God have been perpetuated down through man's history. They have affected every facet of his nature. The human situation, as the Church conceives it, is man separated from God by sin. As a sinner, man stands, as it were, in opposition to God. To solve this human dilemma, the Church offers Christ — as victim for sin and as mediator between God and man.

I have stressed this essential element of the Church's mission because the chaos and disorder of the modern world, together with blind faith in the natural and social sciences, have led many thinkers to define the human situation as basically one of conflict with nature or with society. They assume that the essential human dilemma can be solved by subduing nature and by developing the science of human relations. Progress will only come, they insist, from the energetic exploitation of nature's resources and from the intelligent application of the techniques of adjustment and adaptation to modern life now being developed by social scientists. This profound misconception of the human situation

has fairly captivated the modern mind. Despite the splendid achievements in the sciences which it inspires, it offers no basis for the solution of the human dilemma because it does not understand the nature of the problem. More serious, it has oriented the energy and interests of men toward the pursuit of partial and ephemeral goals, with the result that men's preoccupation with the achievement of these has kept them from investigating the real roots of the human problem.

To summarize this first point briefly, the providential mission of the Church today as always is the restoration and re-creation of mankind. In other words, the Church works to form, to build up, the complete man. Her action is twofold. By teaching the true concept of human nature — man as a composite of body and soul, man as a sharer in the natural and the supernatural, man historically separated from God by sin — she describes the human situation as it really is, thus orienting men's minds toward the correct solution of the essential human dilemma. By her function in dispensing through time and space the merits of Redemption, she offers to all mankind Christ as the victim for sin, Christ as the Mediator between God and Man.

Social Mission

This view of the Church's mission places her squarely and radically "in the world." It is profoundly opposed to "that false and narrow concept of her spirituality and her interior life which would confine her, blind and mute, in the retirement of the sanctuary."[1] If her mission is to form the complete man, she must collaborate without rest in the construction of the solid foundations of society. "This mission is for her essential."[2] In emphasizing this aspect of the Church's mission, Pope Pius XII gave us a definition of the Church which is indispensable for our present discussion. He states:

> . . . Considered from this angle, the Church may be called the assembly of those who, under the supernatural influence of grace, in the perfection of their personal dignity as sons of God and in the harmonious development of all human inclinations and energies, build the powerful structure of human relationships.
>
> Under this aspect, Venerable Brethren, the faithful, and more precisely, the laity, are in the front line of the Church's life; for them the Church is the vital principle of human society. Accordingly they — especially they — must have an ever-clearer sense not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, the community of the faithful on earth under the guidance of the common head, the Pope, and of the Bishops in communion with Him.[3]

But how can the assembly of the faithful collaborate in the construction of the solid foundations of society? It is precisely this aspect of the Church's mission which needs elucidation today. In the first place, we should note that the Pope speaks of "construction," of building. We cannot cling blindly to structures which may have served well in the past. One of the constant refrains of Pius XII has been that a new world is in the process of being built. Either it will be built on the rock of truth or on the shifting sands of false doctrine, but a new world will be built. Second, he speaks of collaboration. Not only must the efforts of the faithful be united, but they must co-operate with all men of good faith in constructing this new world.

Building Solid Foundations

How do men go about "building the solid foundations of society"? I shall confine my discussion to two points: first, an analysis of the basic elements of a cultural institution; and second, an analysis of the component parts of a rational program of action. On the basis of these considerations, it will be possible to indicate the work of the faithful in building up "the powerful structure of human relationships."

An analysis of any social or cultural structure reveals several elements of primary importance. First, there is a basic, underlying set of values, i.e., an ideology, composed of the ultimate cultural goals. These represent the elemental doctrines on the origin, nature, and purpose of man and of society which the group holds. Second, there are derivative sets of values and purposes. These are specific institutional objectives representing the culturally devised applications of the ideology to concrete social institutions such as the economic system, the state, the family, and the church. Third, there are institutionalized means. These represent the culturally patterned and acceptable procedures, the specific sets of social relationships established for the implementation of these institutional objectives.

According to the Christian ideology, God created man; He created him "male and female"; that is, He created man with mutually complementary reproductive organs by means of which man is privileged to co-operate with God in the reproduction of the species; He endowed him

with intellect and will so that, contrary to other animals, man operates not by instinct, but by rational choice; and finally, God created man for heaven, to be gained after a period of service on earth. This service implies that man follows right order in his activities. On the basis of this ideology, we can deduce the essential characteristics of the family (a derivative institutional objective) such as monogamy, indissolubility, and so forth. Further, from an analysis of this institution, we can deduce the essential characteristics of the behavioral patterns pertaining to it. This is to say, the relationship of the sexes should be patterned so that chastity, monogamy, and so forth, can be observed.

Goals Necessitate Means

Two observations follow from this analysis. First, ultimate cultural goals have functional requisites. If these goals are to be achieved, institutions and behavioral patterns must be so constructed that people can attain these goals. For example, the functional requisites of the Catholic concept of marriage and the family are lacking in an economic system which does not pay a living wage, in a juridical system which protects neither the formation nor the dissolution of marriage, in a social system which tolerates flagrant exploitation of the sexual drive, and accepts, if it does not promote, dating and courtship patterns which render the achievement of premarital chastity well-nigh impossible. In this connection, I shall merely pause to point out that such a situation has arisen in our society primarily because there is no consensus on a basic ideology. Modern men do not agree on their definition of the origin, nature, and destiny of man; consequently, it is not surprising if they cannot agree on derivative institutional objectives and on implementing behavioral patterns.

The second observation is this. Even when the same basic ideology is accepted by different human communities, varying either in time or place, their derivative institutional objectives and accompanying behavioral patterns need not be similar. Broadly speaking, these stand in relation to ultimate cultural goals as means to ends. Hence, they are not specifically predetermined by these ultimate goals except where there is only one means available for achieving a given end. Where this necessary relationship between means and end does not exist, man, as a rational creature, can devise many different means for achieving a proposed goal. In a given cultural situation, the means used to attain specific ultimate goals will depend on the character of other institutions, the history and customs of the group, and on their resources in nature and in technological skill. I need only point out the varied types of economic organizations or family systems which have existed in different Christian communities to demonstrate the point I am making here.

Two conclusions follow from this observation. We cannot *a priori* deduce the details of the "structure of human relationships" from our concept of human nature and of its ultimate purpose. In "constructing the solid foundations of society" we must apply practical, not speculative science. Second, institutional forms and behavioral patterns (i.e., means) which worked well in the past, or which function successfully in other human communities, may not serve our purpose under present circumstances. As means, they are useful only if they help us attain our goals. Since we live in a society characterized by extensive and rapid change, we may safely assume that we will be constantly involved in the task of modifying and adjusting the means we employ to achieve our goals. The great danger in such a situation, I might point out in passing, is either that we cling blindly to traditional patterns because they worked well in the past, or we become so confused by the rapidity and extensiveness of change that we lose sight of our ultimate objectives, at least to the extent that we forget they have functional requisites.

Build Society on Beliefs

To summarize this point, in our efforts to construct "the solid foundations of society," we must be aware of the basic elements which constitute a social institution. As members of the Church, we possess a basic ideology, i.e., a concept of the origin, nature, and purpose of man and of society founded on faith and reason. This definition of our ultimate goals is a tremendous contribution to the reconstruction of society, for as we have seen, these constitute the ends in terms of which specific institutional objectives and behavioral patterns are to be structured. Indeed, one of the tragic dilemmas of our age is that the great minds which are fashioning modern society have lost their spiritual roots, while those who have retained their spiritual roots have little to do with constructing the modern world.

On the other hand, the possession of a Christian ideology does not enable us to deduce *a priori* the detailed structure of human relationships in a given situation. Our social institutions, together with the manifold behavioral patterns associated with them, stand as means in terms of these ultimate goals. Consequently, in reconstructing the social order, we are faced with the unending, arduous task of developing means which will adequately assure the realization of our ultimate goals. At best, our efforts will represent little more than a "cultural approximation" of the Catholic ideal. They will be approximations because their very relatedness to a given social milieu limits them to being but one expression of the ideal. They are subject to modification, inasmuch as changes in the total social system may render ineffective some established patterns and call for the substitution of others.

Program of Action

This consideration of the constant need to devise adequate means for the implementation of our goals brings us to the second point in our discussion. This is an analysis of the component parts of a rational program of action.

Such analysis reveals that every rational program of action represents a conclusion based upon a judgment or premise of value and a set of social facts. As Saint Thomas tells us, in planning a program of action, we use a type of syllogism. *"Conferens de agendis utitur syllogismo"* (Ia IIae, p. 76, art. 1). The major represents a judgment of value stating that a certain goal or end is good and desirable, or just the contrary. The minor represents a statement of a social fact, i.e., that a given means, under a determined set of circumstances, will procure the attainment or not of the value expressed in the major. It follows that a rational program of action cannot be deduced from first principles. It implies not only a judgment of value, i.e., a definition of goals; but also a knowledge of social facts, i.e., of means. Since these means deal with the individual and the contingent, they cannot be deduced from general principles, for these deal with universals.

One important conclusion follows from this analysis. If the faithful wish to collaborate in the reconstruction of society, they must acquire a knowledge of social facts. This is to say, they must undergo the long and arduous labor involved in reaching an understanding of the means required to implement their goals in a given social context. It will not be sufficient to provide themselves with a knowledge of Catholic "principles," as if these in themselves constituted a rational program of action. To be sure, some Catholics in the past have seemed to infer that the Popes, through their encyclicals, have supplied us with neat blueprints for action so that all that remained to be done was to put these into operation and society would be reconstructed.

If our analysis of the structure of social institutions and of the elements of rational programs of action is correct, this cannot be the function of encyclicals. Since they apply to the whole world, i.e., to various human communities, their function is to define and clarify our basic ideology, to point out what I have called its functional requisites, and to indicate the general lines to be followed in implementing them. It is our task to devise the means which will assure the achievement of these goals in a specific human community.

If, as the Pope has stated, it is essential for the mission of the Church that we collaborate "without rest in the construction of the solid foundations of society," and if, as our analysis has shown, this collaboration implies a profound knowledge of social facts, i.e., of the means to be used in implementing our principles, then our mission is clearly defined.

Our Mission

First, we must acquire a thorough knowledge of our Catholic ideology and of its basic functional requisites. This is needed because in regard to ultimate goals, we are not free to formulate our own definitions, neither can we piously stand aloof from the world as if these goals could be achieved apart from society.

Second, we must become competent in those modern sciences which enable us to understand the form and functioning of society.

Third, we must become active in those areas of thought and endeavor which at the present time are powerfully influencing the structure of human relationships.

Finally, our efforts must be oriented toward action. This does not mean that we neglect philosophy and "theory." Quite the contrary! But unless our philosophizing and our theorizing are oriented toward action, i.e., unless they seek answers to the problems which plague contemporary man, they may easily become a shallow game fit

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The Mission of the Church

A Theological Statement

Frederick J. Crosson

ANY reflection aimed at understanding the role of the laity in the Church must first resolve a prior question: What is the role of the Church today? For the function of a part of something can be discovered only if we understand the function of the whole, just as you can't understand what a carburetor is unless you know what a gasoline motor is.

Now the job of the Church can be said to have two parts: one primary, the other secondary. Primarily, the never-changing role of the Church is the one with which the hierarchy or the priesthood in general is charged: to baptize all nations, and to teach them what Christ means for the world. This is, so to speak, the missionary aspect of the Church, a mission which extends not merely to foreign lands, but to all places and all peoples where Christ is not yet all in all. The Church is sent to bring us from death to life, and so long as anyone, anywhere, remains in the shadow of that d e a t h, the Church's mission will continue.

The second part of the Church's job is an aspect or development of the first. It is the responsibility to become the leaven of the world, and this falls upon not just the clergy, but upon the whole Mystical Body. And because the world of nature and history has been in bondage to sin, in restoring it to Christ, we restore it so to speak to itself, we restore it to its own natural goodness. For this is in a way the curiosity of history, that a simply natural man has never existed. Before the Fall, Adam was raised above his natural state by certain gifts, and since the Fall we have all been less than what we should be.

Now if this is the mission of the Church as a whole, and not one restricted to those with sacerdotal powers, it is a mission that devolves upon the laity, in virtue of whatever inherent capacity the layman possesses. I say "inherent capacity" because as Father Congar has pointed out in his book on the theology of the laity, this function should not be confused with the strict participation of the layman in the powers of the hierarchy. For example, it is the prerogative of the hierarchy alone to teach the truths of revelation to the faithful. Yet, laymen can be authorized to help in this work, in such organizations as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, or as the lay catechists in the missions do. In doing so, however, the layman acts not according to his own inherent capacity, but as the representative of the hierarchy.

Of himself, that is without any specific authorization from others, the lay Catholic possesses a supernaturally enlightened natural intellect, and a supernaturally strengthened natural will, and with these he can address himself to the Christianizing of the world around him, *insofar* as that Christianizing does not require the dispensing of sacramental graces. In other words, the job of the layman is the reëstablishing of things in the proper order and health and integrity of their natures, precisely by means of the techniques of the natural order. The job of the layman is the realization of a humanism, the creation of a genuinely human way of life.

Now at first glance, this may seem to be somewhat narrow in scope for a Christian. For has this not been the effort of every great civilization? The classical humanisms of Greece and Rome, the Renaissance and countless other periods in the history of the West have described

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and sought to realize a certain ideal of man. The answer is obvious: It is only if the true dimensions of human existence are seen that we can create a society which will fulfill all of man's needs. And the most radical, the most fundamental thing that must be known about man before we can care for any of his needs is what he was made for. The answer to this question we would not know, we *could* not know, unless God had told us. This, then, is the answer to our question: that only a Christian humanism can assuage the deepest and innermost desires of man's soul.

Christianity Enhances Nature

One of the most profound remarks ever made by the Roman humanists was, *"Homo sum, et nihil humanum alienum me* — I am a man, and nothing human is alien to me." I remember a friend of mine telling me this when I was engrossed in preparing for my comprehensive exams in college. He wanted me to go to a dance, and he was reminding me that this, too, was a part of being a man, of being a student, of being in college. But I think we can transpose it, and make a kind of motto for Catholic Action: *"Christianus sum, et nihil humanum alienum me* — I am a *Christian,* and nothing human is alien to me." Nothing that is genuinely human is strange to the Christian, but on the contrary, it is in Christianity that nature achieves its fullest flowering. You remember in Francis Thompson's poem, "The Hound of Heaven," how, when in flight from Christ he says:

. . . though I know His love, Who followed,
Yet was I sore adread,
Lest having Him, I must have naught beside . . .

And when he finally succumbs to the Divine Pursuit, he hears Christ say:

All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harm,
But just that thou mightest seek it in My arms,
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home;
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!

It is only in Christ, then, that that natural world (and I am using "natural" here, of course, to include the social world) can become really satisfying to man, because it is only when the truths of Christianity guide the order of society, that is, the way we act and live, that those ways of acting and living truly correspond to what we *know* man's deepest needs are. If we wanted to express it most paradoxically, we could say that only by living supernaturally can we live a perfectly natural life. The downward gift of grace has the power to raise up what it permeates.

Well, if all of this is true, then we might approach it from the other side, so to speak, and say that the more fully human our way of living and acting is, the closer it will be to the supernatural. Parenthetically, let me hasten to add that if this were a technical paper in theology, I would have to be making more qualifications than I am. For example, the supernatural is so completely and absolutely above the natural that in one sense no way of life can be called closer to it than another. Nevertheless, there is also a sense in which what I am saying is perfectly true.

A fully human way of life, then, as distinguished from a way of life corrupted by sin, can be said to be *open* to the supernatural in the sense mentioned. Remember that a *perfectly* human life becomes *possible,* although not necessarily actually realized, when it is sanctified by grace. But it is possible for a non-Christian society, or family, or individual, to *aim* at achieving that perfectly human life even though because of original sin, it cannot be achieved. In such a case, the society or family or individual will be open to the gift of grace, because it will realize that something is necessary to close the gap between its aspiration and the achievement. On the other hand, a society or family or individual who simply accepts the sinful state of man as the *natural* state, will be in a sense closed to revelation and grace, since it would seem to serve no purpose.

Example Clarifies

Let us try to make this clear by an example. If a society holds chastity to be an ideal, something to be striven for by everyone, and yet realizes the difficulty of its attainment, it will first of all be a healthier and happier society, and secondly, it will be in a position to understand the significance of original sin, of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, and of the sacraments as aids in achieving its ideal. If on the contrary, a society, which does not consider chastity an ideal, is told that only the pure in heart shall see God, that even to look upon a woman with lust is to have committed adultery in intention — in short, that urges which seem to be natural are really not so — well, obviously, such a society will have a more difficult time accepting the Christian doctrine than our first society.

Note that I say a more difficult time — because no person can ever get so far from God

that there is not enough grace to bring him back. But — and this is the crucial point — in such a society as the second one, the customary ways of thinking and evaluating and acting *militate against* the free acceptance of Our Lord's message. If, in any open society, Christ can be freely chosen, in a closed society the choosing is difficult, and not because of the person choosing, for even with the best will in the world, such a choice must run counter to "the way things are done" — to the attitudes of one's family, friends, and social circle.

Multiply Free Acts

We are now in a position to understand a statement of the job of Catholic Action which I heard given a number of years ago at an international meeting of Young Christian Students. It was said that the role of Catholic Action was *to multiply the possibility of free acts.* Let us examine this phrase, for it can reveal to us, perhaps under a somewhat different aspect, one of the fundamental characteristics of the apostolate.

Up until now, we have been talking about an ideal of humanism which might serve to help define the role of the laity in the Church. Now we have to distinguish that role in another way, namely, the manner of its fulfillment. To do that, we must advert to certain basic notions of philosophy and sociology. Actually we have already touched upon these in talking about our two societies. The point made, then, that it is difficult to choose Christ in opposition to the ideas of one's family and friends, rested, of course, on the implicit assumption that society conditions or affects our choices and values much more than we frequently realize. It is not enough to reply that it *shouldn't* influence us when it comes to *choosing* what is right or wrong, for two reasons: (1) as a matter of fact, it *does* influence us in many cases when it shouldn't, that is, when we know we should do something, but don't because we don't want to "be different"; (2) there are many times when the influence is unconscious, that is, when we do something a certain way because "that's the way it's done" and the question of its being wrong has never come up.

Let me say at once to prevent any misunderstanding, that I am making no excuse for a deliberately wrong act committed simply from fear of being different. Our Lord used very strong language about such a situation: He said, "If a man does not hate his father and mother for My sake, he is not worthy of Me." (Luke 14:26) He used extreme examples, of course, because He was trying to make the point very forcefully that *no one's* feelings — not even those nearest and dearest to us — must be preferred before His feelings. But is it a good thing, would it be a good thing, if we *did* have to dislike our father and mother in order to love Our Lord? Let's generalize the question. Is it a good thing, if in order to act the way Christ wants us to act, we have to alienate ourselves from our neighbors, our schoolmates, our society?

It seems to me that our whole problem stands or falls on this question. If we say that it *is* good, then I do not think that there is any purpose to the lay apostolate, in the sense in which I am trying to define it at any rate, because in that case the *harder* it is to choose Christ, the better. If on the contrary, it is *not* good that choosing Christ means setting oneself against society, then our path is clear: we have to remake society, create new attitudes, new values, new ways of thinking and acting, so that at any given moment, choosing what God wants us to do has the *support* of society, rather than having to fight against it.

Christ "Not of This World"

And here I am forced to a somewhat theological clarification. Let us put it in the form of an objection. Didn't Our Lord say that the world *would* hate us, if we loved Him, because He was not of this world? That is, why should we expect to find society congenial to Christians? The New Testament has many examples of this use of the term "world," and all of them manifest an antipathy, a radical opposition between "the world" and the kingdom of God. But we cannot take this to refer to the natural world of nature, of society and love and birth and knowledge, because then we would be asserting that something God made is evil, is opposed to Him. Therefore, the term can mean the world only insofar as, wounded by original sin, it tends to deflect man from his orientation toward God. What Our Lord meant was that a weakened human nature tends to drag man and his works down from the path of ascent toward the naturally good and the supernaturally good, and that, therefore, when one chooses to make the difficult ascent, the customary ways of thinking and acting will be opposed to him, and the people accustomed to think and act in these ways will dislike him because he is unlike them.

I have until now avoided using the word "easier" to describe the encouragement that I am suggesting society should give to the living of a Christian life. The reason for avoiding it, is that it could give the idea that I am advocating a comfortable Christianity, one which has made its peace with the world. Here is our ambiguous word again, and if we take it in the sense of the genuinely natural world, rather than the fallen or deflected world, then I would say that I *am* suggesting that the function of the apostolate is to organize the world in such a way that Christianity becomes easier to practice.

Actually, of course, this is not at all a radical notion. Would you rather practice temperance in the company of a group of drunkards, or in the company of a group of sober and temperate people? In either case, if this happens to be a special temptation, it will be hard enough . . . but I think there is no doubt in anyone's mind which would be preferable. We cannot completely overcome the weaknesses which original sin has caused in our nature, but as Aristotle said, habit is a kind of second nature, and the habits which society develops in us either consciously or unconsciously can go a long way toward helping us overcome these weaknesses.

Less Heroic Virtue

We can sum all of this up by saying that the reorganization of society by the laity has the aim of diminishing the necessity for heroic virtue, for that heroic virtue which enables one to withstand the whole world for the sake of Christ, and which was so eminently practiced by the early Christian martyrs, as well as by our contemporary martyrs, behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. My reason for asserting this aim for the lay apostolate is that while heroic virtue may be demanded from any of us in certain circumstances, it *ought not* to be demanded as the ordinary way of life for the ordinary Christian. It *can* be demanded, but it *ought not* to be demanded as a *general* rule. To put it in a negative and over-simplified way, if it is bad to surround a person with occasions of sin, then it is good to remove as many of those occasions as possible.

Well, with an audience familiar with the techniques of Catholic Action, I need not develop the method for attaining this goal. I have been talking about customary ways of thinking and acting, alienating oneself from family, friends, habits. All of these things are implied in the statement that Catholic Action is an *institutionalized* apostolate. That is, it has as its object not individuals directly, but the socially acceptable patterns of action which, in turn, form the habits of persons growing up and living in the society.

Social and Interior Life

The philosophical basis of this method is the reciprocal influence of interior life upon social life and of social life upon interior life. The composite unity of man's body and soul is such that these two realms — social life and interior life — must reflect each other at every point. For instance, a man cannot pray interiorly unless he adopts a certain worldly position: drops to his knees, or gazes on a crucifix, or disengages himself from things by standing still or walking back and forth in an automatic way. A man cannot believe in the dignity of human personality unless in his everyday commerce with others he treats them in such a way as to manifest that belief. If he does not treat others in that way, then he does not or will not long believe in human dignity, but such a notion will simply become one idea among others in his mind to which he gives no allegiance. If he believes that workingmen have the right and duty to organize, then he will manifest or incarnate that belief in his social actions: if a legislator, he will vote for laws protecting such organizations, if a workingman he will join them. Looking at it from the other side, if a person is brought up in a society which treats marriage as a sacred institution, indissoluble and God-given, then he will believe that marriage is this. If a person lives in a society in which married couples strive to have as few children as possible, then that person is not free — in the sense which we defined before — to have many children. Here we rejoin our earlier statement of the purpose of Catholic Action, that it should multiply the possibility of free acts. By organizing society in the light of Christian truth, it removes those social pressures which militate against the free exercise of natural and Christian virtues.

Well, two main points have been made so far. The first was the necessity for a Christian humanism, because the fulfilling and enriching of our lives is good in itself even on the natural level, and paradoxically this achievement of the fully natural is possible only by means of the supernatural. The second was that by an institutional apostolate, we who are Christians and

the leaven of society can organize society in such a way that its members will be opened to the light of truth and made free to choose not only the naturally good, but also the supernaturally good. This free choice is what an imperfect and unchristian society tends to prevent, or to make more difficult.

Truth Alone Not Enough

I turn now to a third and final point which arises naturally from what has gone before. We have been speaking of organizing society in the light of Christian truth. But precisely because the apostolate is one of *action*, because it terminates in the concrete, the light of Christian truth is not enough. For one of the constant temptations of Catholics — and it is really a form of self-delusion — is to substitute the *moral* certitude of the Church's teaching for the technical information and ability which are equally necessary in the final choice of action. What we are referring to has been called by others the problem of the relation between mystique and technique.

Let's take an example to clarify our terms. Suppose a strike is taking place in a factory. We know that justice to both parties must be taken into account in any solution. The owners should be assured a proper compensation for their direction and investment, the workers should be assured a living wage, sufficient for a family and for ordinary human needs. But how much should the wages be? No amount of moral precepts can tell us what the amount fixed should be. Not that moral precepts are not relevant to the decision — they certainly are — as the remarks made about just compensation and a living wage indicate. But of themselves they are incomplete; they must be completed by technical precepts which resolve such questions as how much is a just compensation for capital? How much does a family need to live humanly, here and now? Only the trained economist will be able to answer such questions.

Let us attempt to place this distinction, here recognized as a matter of fact, in its philosophical and theological context. We touch here on an issue which, it seems to me, cannot be sufficiently stressed, because we always seem to forget it. Yet it is at the very heart not only of Catholic theology, but of our everyday lives.

I refer to the relation between the providential and all-encompassing causality of God on one hand, and the causality of our particular actions on the other. I am writing a paper now, and certainly I am responsible for what I say and how I say it. Yet unless God were also causing the writing, also giving it existence, there would be no paper. The fact that God causes *everything* that is *to be* does not in the least diminish the fact that we cause things to be, and that therefore we are responsible for what we do. To call Mary the Co-redemptrix does not mean that she partly redeems us and Christ partly redeems us: it means that Christ alone is wholly responsible for our redemption, but that Mary is also responsible for all redemption. The fact that God alone could offer a sacrifice which would redeem man does not mean that the sacrifice offered daily by the priest is not an efficacious sacrifice.

If we transpose this relation now to the subject at hand, we can see that it is realized in the old maxim, "Pray as if all depended on God and work as if everything depended on you." The last part of the maxim is absolutely true: everything *does* depend on you. For what the relation between God and man means here is that what God wills will be carried out only through the ordinary course of events by you and me, or it will not be carried out at all. I am of course setting aside the miraculous intervention of God in history, for this is the rare, the exceptional event which we certainly cannot depend on to feed the hungry and defend the oppressed. Ordinarily, God works, as He is working now in my words, through *our* actions to achieve *His* goals.

Active Abandonment

We must then be His instruments, we must abandon ourselves to the Divine Will. But these familiar spiritual counsels must be properly understood: if God wills that the ignorant be enlightened, that the hungry be fed, that the oppressed receive justice, then the abandonment to His Will is a decidedly active abandonment. And here we meet the final problem: how are *we* going to do these things? Like any master, God does not tell us *how* — He merely says *do* it! To *pray* for something to come about, then, without doing everything reasonable within *our* power to bring it about is either schizophrenic, or insulting to God — it is either an ignorance of the connection of the two orders of prayer and action, or else it is wishing the master to do what the servant should do. Let us sum all of this up by saying that if the problems of this human world are to be solved, they will be solved *only by human techniques*. More pertinently and precisely for our purposes, if the problems are not

to be solved by the dispensing of divine grace — as for example the anguish of the soul in sin can be assuaged by absolution — then they will only be solved by you and I bending our minds and bodies to the task.

One may properly speak therefore, with respect to the lay apostolate, of an *autonomy* of the layman, since he is thrown back on his own resources in the attempt to Christianize society.

Proper Nature, Laws

It is for this reason that the supernatural mystique of Catholic Action, the spiritual values which it seeks to incarnate in temporal institutions, can be realized only by respecting the proper nature, the proper laws of the institution which it seeks to Christianize. Insofar as mystique encroaches upon technique, the new organization of the institution will tend to wrench it from its normal relations to the social environment. Take an example of this: I have myself known families, who in their desire to sanctify their lives, to become more perfect Christians, have conceived that in order to sanctify their marriage, it was necessary to turn the home into a kind of little monastery, where prayers were recited at regular hours during the day. Naturally such couples tended to be more withdrawn from the neighborhood in which they lived than a family in which prayers were fitted to the ordinary routine of life: e.g., grace before meals, a family rosary, but no multiplication of prayers at odd hours. I am not, of course, depreciating the power of prayer, but merely suggesting that the apostolate of the laity is not *primarily* one of prayer, but of action.

Let me quote from a well-known Catholic philosopher, who is here discussing the necessity for guarding against this kind of intrusion in the realm of scholarship. Etienne Gilson says this:

> If one wishes to practice science for God, the first condition is to practice science for itself, or as if one practiced it for itself, because it is the only way to acquire it. . . . It is the same with art, since it must be possessed before putting it to the service of God. We are told that faith constructed the cathedrals of the Middle Ages; no doubt, but faith would have done nothing at all if there had not also been architects; and if it is true that the façade of Notre Dame is a springing of the soul toward God, that does not prevent it from being also a work of geometry; it was necessary to know geometry in order to construct a façade which was an act of charity.
>
> Let us Catholics, then, who profess the eminent value of nature, because it is the work of God, show our respect in posing as first principle of our action that *piety never dispenses with technique.* (From *Christianity and Philosophy*)

A corollary of this distinction of mystique and technique is the familiar proposition that Catholic Action is a specialized apostolate, that it is the lawyers who must Christianize law, the workers who must Christianize the labor unions, the students who must Christianize the student world. Another corollary is the perhaps equally familiar observation that the "Holy Joe" is generaly not an effective CA man, or probably not a CA man at all, because he is not conversant with the "techniques" of social life. He is not integrated into his social environment, perhaps because he has already chosen the "better part" like Mary — at any rate, the social apostolate is not his.

I might mention in passing one area which seems to me to suffer at the present time from a lack of clarity in this regard, and that is the whole question of the role of women in modern society. I think that there is possibly no area with greater promise of future importance at the present time. This problem can no longer be resolved by asserting the unquestioned primacy of woman's role as wife and mother in the home — for the very terms of this assertion are being changed by the technological and sociological developments which enable the role to be fulfilled with less time and energy. Our Holy Father has taken note of this a number of times.

Spiritual Foundation

To put technique in its proper perspective, let us recall what Pius XI said in *Quadragesimo Anno:* that whatever organizations of workers and owners may be required by the nature of modern economic systems, they will all ultimately be insufficient to gain peace and justice without supernatural charity. The merely naturally good institution will always corrupt, because as Our Lord said, "Without Me you can do nothing." The spiritual formation of the lay apostle is the indispensable cornerstone of his work.

For the incarnation in social institutions of a Christian Humanism, which is the job of the laity in the Church today, is really only our participation in another Incarnation, which similarly is accomplished in an institution: the Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ. And just as the Incarnation of Our Lord was accomplished only through the Spirit of love, so with ours, because as St. John wrote, "It is in loving the brethren that we have been brought from death to life." (I John 3)

The Training of Lay Missionaries

Violet Nevile

IN EVERY specialized form of the Apostolate developed in a new group or society within the Church, a new and appropriate system of training for the members is one of the first things that has to be formulated. The first plans must, of course, be subject to later changes, simply because, as often as not, those formulating them are themselves in the "formative" stage within this new group and much is worked out on the basis of trial and error. Without a solid, theological foundation, however, the errors involved will be unnecessarily serious and even tragic, and it is certainly thanks to the deep spirituality of Father Vincent Lebbe and his close friend, Father André Boland, that good theological foundations were laid in the beginnings of the International Catholic Auxiliaries. Once these foundations are secured, adaptations in methods and means according to the ever-changing needs of the new members can safely be undertaken without fear of diminishing or altering the original spirit of the group.

This account of Training in the Auxiliaries is, therefore, an account not of a rigid and unalterable structure, but of the current applications of some basic and unalterable principles. This is, of course, an ideal picture.

Aims

To put it briefly, an Auxiliary is someone who has dedicated her life to God in the world as a lay-person. She lives out her consecration in a mission-country with the general purpose of the establishment of the Church and the specific purpose of the promotion of a responsible and apostolic Christian laity in those countries. She does this through her profession and in a particular framework of life — the team — also in a particular spirit. The spirit in which she lives is one of the most important aspects where training is concerned, since it colors all aspects of her life from her personal consecration to God to the practice of her profession. The spiritual life of an Auxiliary should be such as to bear witness to the Resurrection — that Christ, in rising, has conquered sin and death once for all — True, the battle has to be fought by each man, but there is no doubt of the final outcome. Optimism, courage, joy are the outward signs of this certainty. The particular form of consecration asked of her is not only to give herself to God by renouncing marriage, possessions, personal ambition, but to give herself generously to Him through His children and in their service for the establishment of His kingdom. As a lay person she must be someone who values and respects human effort, culture, progress and science in themselves. This must be through conviction and not just because she is inevitably involved in them and this conviction must show in her life. If it does, the fact that she bears witness to the supremacy of the spiritual will carry far more weight in the direct apostolate than if she underestimated human values and regarded them as means to an end with no inherent worth. Her love of God and her appreciation of human values should help her also to be ready, in all humility, to co-operate with everyone, whether Christian or not and to learn from them — In this connection an Auxiliary is expected to make a particular effort to detach herself from her country of origin in order to be "one in heart and mind" with the people of her mission-country. The superiority of Christian love over race, class and national barriers must be shown by her personally and by the fact that she lives in a team of mixed nationalities and backgrounds. All of this requires detachment, humility and great charity.

Members

Having looked briefly at the objectives we now come to the next point — who is trying to reach this objective. The answer is — as mixed a group of girls as you could hope to find anywhere — At present they come from eighteen

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different nationalities — each one with her own background, personality, education, experience and abilities. The training that is to help all these girls towards the fulfillment of their vocation must be very complete and at the same time very flexible.

The program of training can be broken down into the two main aspects: spiritual and professional.

Spiritual Training

The spiritual training must be understood to embrace not only the personal spiritual life of an Auxiliary but also the natural and supernatural aspects of her missionary and apostolic training. It is given through the three principal means of (1) personal guidance and spiritual direction, (2) the study of the doctrines of the Church and other allied subjects and, (3) the study and practical experience of various forms or "methods" of apostolate.

Personal Guidance

Spiritual direction is supplemented by guidance or "counselling" given to those in training by the members of the staff of the training center. Every two or three weeks the Auxiliary in training will have an interview with a member of the staff and discuss any problems or difficulties she may have. A great degree of the responsibility for her own progress rests on her and it is up to her to mention anything about which she needs advice or help. These discussions may cover anything from her progress in prayer to the quality and quantity of her work — from doubts about her vocation to a clash of personality with another Auxiliary.

The aim of the interview is to encourage and guide the Auxiliary in the development of her personal spiritual life by helping her to put the general principles of the Christian life and the particular aims of the Society into practice. This is also one of the aims in view in the study of religious subjects, but whereas the study of ascetical theology, for example, remains largely theoretical, counselling helps towards a more personal understanding and application of the principles involved.

Very often, false conscience problems and discouragement arise from an ardent desire for good, absolutely isolated from knowledge of the doctrine of the mercy of God. If the girl can be helped to analyze her problem and then to see where it fits in relation to the doctrine, this is often sufficient to free her from her scruples or discouragement.

It would be generally true to say that most girls, when they join the Society, have only very elementary and often false notions about the nature of man and the nature of grace. Such notions as they do have are often kept in more or less watertight compartments of their minds, so that the necessary inter-relation of the two has not the force of reality to them. This means that much of the training has to begin on a purely human level — but here again, it is not enough for them to study psychology, philosophy, and theology. They also need practical help in seeing where and how the truths studied apply to daily life. One of the ways in which this is often needed is in sorting out their notions on the importance of feelings. They often think that it is hypocritical or a betrayal of one's real self to act in contradiction to how one feels. To understand that feeling is only secondary to will and can be often very misleading does not always make the struggle easier, but it does at least channel their efforts in the right direction, so that instead of trying hard to *feel* charitable, they try rather to *be* charitable. Since the counselling is to help them to be good Christians first and good Auxiliaries second, it will aim first of all at the consolidation of virtues necessary to all baptized Christians and, secondly, it will aim at developing those human and Christian qualities particularly desirable and necessary for this vocation.

On the human level, notably a sense of responsibility and initiative, efficiency, adaptability and spirit of collaboration — on the spiritual level, a wholehearted giving of herself to the apostolate, love of the Church and in particular the missionary aspect of the Church. Generous, humble love of all men inspiring a supernatural adaptability to understanding of their culture and mentality — a supernatural spirit of the Gospels, guided by Father Lebbe's three principles, *Total Renunciation, True Charity,* and *Constant Joy.* Needless to say, this spirit of the Gospels is best taught by Our Lord Himself through those means He chose for all of us — Mass and the sacraments. Every opportunity is given in the training centers to learn about the place of the Mass and the sacraments in the Christian life, and to put it into practice. Here again the courses, counselling, and also active liturgical partici-

pation in dialogue masses help towards a spirituality based on firm foundations and readily adaptable to all cultures.

Courses

The courses in apologetics, dogma, scripture, history of the Church, missiology, ethics, ascetical theology, social problems, etc., all have the twofold object of giving knowledge to be applied and used by the Auxiliaries for themselves and to be passed on to those with whom they work later on. Even here, in instances where an Auxiliary has sometimes listened passively to courses, she has suddenly been brought into contact with someone who doubts or asks searching questions about the Faith and she has eagerly come back to the classes stimulated to study and understand more. These formal courses are supplemented by short courses or occasional lectures, personal studies, and group studies on cultural, moral, philosophical, social and political questions at home and abroad. The topics studied in these ways range from personal studies of the Gospels, to group studies of certain countries or mission-areas. In the former a topic is assigned such as the teaching of Our Lord on Poverty, Social Justice, Filial Love, or a hundred other possibilities. This topic is studied in the Gospels. The pertinent texts are copied, read and re-read and meditated often, so that, eventually, they can begin to have in them "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" — The group-studies range from the brief discussion of a theme, with everybody participating, to a three-four week study carried out in their spare time by a small team, on a country of their own choosing and followed by a presentation to the whole group in which the country is described from different points of view — geographical, historical, cultural and religious, political, etc. Very often, movies are invaluable aids to making these presentations vivid and memorable.

In other words, the intellectual part of their missionary training aims at the natural and supernatural level of the Auxiliaries' lives, just as does the counselling. Most of the courses in dogma, philosophy, etc., are given by priests. Some are given by the qualified members of the training staff.

Apostolic Work

The third means used for spiritual training also contributes to both the theoretical knowledge and the personal spiritual life of the Auxiliary. It is the study and practice of the various forms and methods of the lay apostolate. Although forms of apostolate which are effective in this country may not be applicable in another yet there are some guiding principles which have been applied in their development here which could validly be applied in other developments in the missions — Those principles and the techniques issuing from them should be studied by a future missionary in the perspective of the growing Church in the missions. So far, in Chicago, we have not been able to do as much in this way as we would like, but that can be improved as we get a bigger group here. The Auxiliaries who have been able to attend YCS or YCW meetings and study-weeks or to work in the Legion of Mary have gained a precious understanding of real problems and ways of dealing with them never supplied by class or study.

One of the dangers inherent in a formal training program such as ours, given to lay people, is that the physical set-up involved — a big group living together, well-ordered daily schedule of prayer, study, work, and recreation, an organized series of interesting courses — tends to isolate them from the world and make their knowledge of the apostolate too theoretical. If this resulted it would mean the whole program of training had failed, since its object is to train strong, reliable apostles who can incarnate Christianity in the world. The amount of matter to be learned is such that it seems necessary to give it intensively in this way and be sure that it is given before the Auxiliary leaves for the missions. This is where the experience in various forms of apostolate can be particularly useful. It not only gives the necessary knowledge of methods, it also helps to obviate the risk of over-emphasis on the theoretical and complacency within one's own group, and provides an opportunity for a felt-experience of sin and suffering essential to the development of an apostle.

Professional Training

At the beginning we mentioned the attitude an Auxiliary should have about human values in the secular world and also the spirit in which she goes as a missionary to another country. Our approach to these two points is what makes our professional training so important.

During spiritual training the Auxiliaries learn of the place in the plan of redemption of human endeavor, of natural skills, of sincere human values. During professional training they try to acquire skill and science so that later they can use it for a worthwhile human betterment of their fellow men and the natural foundation on which grace can build. As lay people they must have and show a real esteem and respect for these values, a sense of responsibility for the good ordering of the world. As Father Lebbe said — "We tend the sick in order to cure them. If, later on, we baptize them, well and good, but we tend them to cure them and not in order to baptize them." This holds good in all spheres of our life as lay people with a profession. We cannot excuse ourselves for inefficiency or poor training on the pretext that it is secondary anyway and that we are in the missions for a higher purpose. Of course, it will sometimes happen that an Auxiliary's profession will be subordinated to other needs. For instance in the Training Centers and in the Crossroads Student Centers, the staff very often has training that equips them for other professional work — this training is not wasted but it is not used in the usual way. This kind of thing however, rarely, if ever, occurs in the missions. The professional training, therefore, is taken seriously with an eye to the needs of the mission countries. Medicine, education and social work are the major categories and there is much demand for Auxiliaries trained as doctors, nurses, technicians, midwives, educators, sociologists and social workers of all kinds. There is also a demand for people with a good general education who can turn their hand to many things ranging from organizing day camps for children through painting posters to discussing Philosophy.

This training is taken in colleges and universities and during it the Auxiliaries live either at the Training Center, or, if desirable because of the distance or the type of training, in the school she is attending. Almost all the Auxiliaries will be given at least the equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree in whatever her profession is to be. Many will continue to the level of a Master's Degree and some to that of a Doctorate. This, naturally, depends on the professional field she will be working in.

Those girls joining the Society who have already an adequate professional training are not required to take any more but go right ahead with the spiritual training. This means they will be ready for an assignment between two and three years after they join. Those who do take some professional training do so in between the first two years and the final year of missionary training.

As we mentioned at the beginning, the girls who join the Society are just about as varied as they could be. The training they receive is supposed to turn them into Auxiliaries, not according to a mold which disregards their personalities, but developing and perfecting each personality as fully as possible. This is why we try continually to revise and re-evaluate our methods so that they shall correspond with contemporary needs and assure that we reach the objectives aimed at.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

(Continued from page 5)

only for the entertainment of intellectual dilettantes. We have suffered overlong from the sterility of our philosophers and the superficiality of our theorists contenting themselves with the utterance of empty clichés and pious bromides.

To summarize, then, the mission of the Church today is the same as her mission has always been: to restore and re-create mankind. She does this by building up and forming the complete man — man as the bridge between spirit and sense, man as the sharer in the natural and the supernatural, man as he exists in the designs of God. To accomplish this mission, the Church cannot confine her efforts within the sanctuary. She must work ceaselessly at "constructing the solid foundations of society" and at "building up the powerful structure of human relationships." This requires a profound knowledge of social facts and the logical application of this knowledge in programs of action. This mission of the Church is so essential today because a new world is in process of being constructed. Either the faithful will prepare themselves to become competent builders, or other hands will take over the task, as they have already done in so many instances.

[1] Pius XII, *The Function of the Church* (National Catholic Welfare Conference: Washington, D. C., 1946), p. 9.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

The Apostolate of Adult Friendship

Vincent J. Giese

NEARLY five years ago I happened by the parish rectory one day. It was my first official contact with the parish into which I had moved the previous year. In the course of a conversation with the young curate, I learned about the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine unit in the parish. Father invited me to work with him one night a week in instructing Catholic students attending the public high school in the neighborhood. The invitation marked the beginning of what has been a wonderful experience working with a young priest in a parish youth apostolate.

We look about us today — some four years later — and we can point with a certain amount of pride to a fully developed youth program in our parish on the South side of Chicago. Along with our weekly Confraternity program, our parish now has a Young Adults Club for young people over twenty-one; a fully developed Young Christian Workers apostolate which now numbers four sections. Our YCW is organized among teenage boys who are freshmen in high school; among teenage juniors, seniors and recent graduates (boys and girls mixed); and among our over twenty-one group of Young Adults, where we have two YCW sections: a leader's group which meets weekly and an action group which meets bimonthly. In all there are nearly forty young people sitting down regularly in small groups for Gospel, Liturgy and Social inquiries.

Without a doubt a book could be written (and may be some day) about the joys and sorrows, the setbacks and disappointments, the moments of success that we have experienced the past four years in our work among young people in a parish neighborhood. But in this present article I want to report on only one phase of my involvement in the youth program in our parish. This is my work with high school students. What I have experimented with may be of interest to others seeking ways of making contact with young people and helping them through the difficult period of adolescence. What I have to report is not the result of experience as a trained youth or social worker. Youth work is not my fulltime vocation. It is rather an interest cultivated through active participation in the Young Christian Workers and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. I owe my ideas in particular to the YCW.

It has been my privilege to sit in on countless small-group meetings with these teenagers — most of them public high school students — the past four years, and in that way, to get to know them in a most intimate way. I suppose now I look upon myself as a kind of older brother to these teenagers, which is a quite different role than that of priest, parent, teacher, chaperon, social worker, or police officer. This is the uniqueness of my position, and it is worth discussing. Through a close association with these teenagers over the years, I sincerely believe they look upon me as an older brother, too, which means I now can be on the most familiar terms with them, completely at ease among them, and unobtrusive. They are no longer conscious of my presence. I do not believe they would act much differently or talk much differently whether or not I was present among them. They have in this sense accepted me into their own circle of interests.

Brotherliness also has meant a real sharing with my teenage friends of what I have and of what I am. There has been no strain in such a familiar exchange. As in a normal family situation, everything — within limits — belongs to everyone else. There is little fuss about who uses what or when or even why. When any of these teenagers visit my home, I try to create this atmosphere of common sharing.

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Another way of saying this is to say that I try to be available when they want me. What is even more difficult, I try to place my possessions at their disposal. The notion of availability was partly behind my decision a year ago to set up my own apartment. The more deeply I became involved in the youth apostolate, the more clearly I saw the need for having facilities through which I could work more personally with these boys and girls. My own facilities made it possible for me to be more available.

The fellows in particular look upon my home as a sort of neighborhood clubroom. It is always open to them. Its rugged interior, kitchen facilities, and basement location make the apartment desirable to teenagers. In view of the fact that drug stores, street corners or bowling alleys are the only other possible youth hangouts in the neighborhood, the boys appreciate the open-door policy established in my own home. They feel free to come over — and bring their friends — to kill time, play cards, eat, listen to music, and in particular, to hold meetings. The place is theirs as well as mine. They have a feeling of possession, and a slowly developing sense of responsibility towards the place. They help take care of it now.

No Tippy-Toes

House rules are few. The boys do not have to act like angels at a tea party or take off their shoes and tippy-toe around. They can be a little rough — make music, work out on the typewriter, raid the ice box. If I can't be with them, I give them the key, but usually I try to make at least an appearance. A Sunday afternoon that is somewhat typical: around 3:00 in the afternoon five of the fellows came over. They played cards for about an hour when another group — this time girls — joined them.

When the group was all together, we held our YCW meeting, which lasted about an hour. We had a Gospel discussion, a liturgy discussion on the new Holy Week ceremonies, and a Social Inquiry on dating. After that we served ham sandwiches and coffee. The girls took care of the lunch, while the fellows resumed their card game. After the meeting, I left for another appointment and left the house in their care. When I came home that night, the apartment was in good shape; the dishes were all washed and everything was in order. When they left, I have no idea.

Availability means I try to be at their disposal. I try to adjust my time to theirs, not blindly, but always with an eye on what the group wants. Sometimes it is difficult to place the group's preference above my own personal interest, but I find this a necessary adjustment. Availability also means approachability. It means always having time for the group, always being free to talk with individual members personally, to kid with them, to hear out a problem. No strain, no rigid scheduling, no channels, no red tape. Everything must be easy and natural, again as we expect things in a family situation.

Instinctive Hospitality

Hospitality as a corollary to availability goes without saying. It is part of the open-door policy, part of being accessible. If there is one way I try to make my presence felt among young people, it is through hospitality rather than by lectures, admonitions, or stern looks. By now it is almost instinctive to be hospitable to them when they are my guests. That means to be at their service, to make them feel at home, to prepare food for them when possible. A small ham and a pound of coffee are inexpensive, but the ham makes dozens of sandwiches and all kinds of good will and good spirit are created. Hospitality, in brief, generates friendliness. It makes the teenagers feel at home, happy, wanted, accepted, respected — it satisfies in one swoop all those deep psychological needs they have at this

period of their lives. Hospitality means never to make them feel like they are intruding or disturbing or causing inconvenience. This is one impression these boys and girls must never receive, because they simply would not come back. They are too honest.

Finally, a word about *trust*. Trust is the key principle which sums up all the others. Simply, I trust them, and they know it. Everything breathes trust. There are no suspicions, no second guesses of motives or actions. Under such a climate of trust, it is my conviction, no sin will be committed. Mutual trust creates a sense of reverence. And I have no need to preach such ideas as brotherliness, availability, hospitality or trust. I have no need to introduce these themes into their teenage discussions. In good time all these grand ideas will be discussed. When that time comes, I am sure these boys and girls will have the right ideas, simply because they have become acclimated to them.

Fundamental Question

There are many advantages which an adult friend could offer young people during these formative years. But always we come back to the fundamental question: what is most likely to influence them for good in later life? Will it be athletic programs, social activities, crafts and hobbies, retreats and pilgrimages, religious instructions? The question I try to ask myself is this: what can an adult friend offer that is unique — something that the average teenagers may not learn at home, school or church? What will make the most vivid impression on their fertile minds? If not now, surely in later years when they have youngsters of their own? I like to believe that these boys and girls will remember those days when they were free to come to my home and there be accepted at their own worth and at face value, and on equal footing, with trust, and above all else, with a brotherly love by someone who was genuinely interested in them. It sounds like a simple lesson to learn, but I wonder where else they might have an opportunity to learn it?

Some have said this is foolishness. It sounds too much like I have been "taken in" by a group of irresponsible American teenagers who will recall nothing of the experience three years from now. They suspect I have wasted time which might have been more profitably spent at some other apostolate — perhaps in intellectual pursuits or in some other social action project. After all, this is a handful of young people who certainly are not my responsibility, who are not my kin, and who have teachers, parents and priests whose mission it is to worry about them. What can an adult friend contribute to the work of these others? So the argument goes.

Others have written off this generation of teenagers — in particular these gang-minded toughs from the rough and tumble big city neighborhoods. These near-delinquent, irresponsible, shiftless, mass-minded, gang-crazy modern youth — a kind of prototype of our crazy, hopeless world. Sadly, numbered among those who look down on modern youth, who can't be bothered with them, who find them difficult to deal with, are some parents, teachers, civic and religious leaders.

If the experiment proves out, a definite calling to some few people in every parish neighborhood to become friends of the most neglected youth in their neighborhood might be aborning. The experiment might show the unique role to be played by such friends. It certainly would show the benefit of the Young Christian Workers in a parish.

Thinking along these lines, a group of interested priests and laity in Chicago have worked up a set of meetings — Gospel and Social inquiries — on the problems of teenagers today for use by such groups. The emphasis of the program is on the parish neighborhood rather than on the school environment. They may be secured through the YCW Headquarters, 1700 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Work With the Church

I mention these, because in all our work in the youth apostolate, we cannot be free-wheeling, but we must work directly with the Church. Ideally, we should be part of some apostolic leadership training program at the parish level and enjoy the full support and confidence of a priest. This is the great difference between the work of the Church in youth areas and a similar work by the community or some civic agency. The work is apostolic — it is tied in closely with the apostolate of the Church and is not merely a humanitarian adventure designed to keep youngsters off street corners or out of jail.

Apostolic Purifications

Louis Lochet, S.J.

WE ARE familiar with the famous analyses by which Saint John of the Cross has pointed out the progress of contemplation. He discovers in the night of the senses and the night of the spirit, a sort of internal law of the contemplative life which leads it, by the sheer rhythm of its normal development, unto a stripping away of everything for the perfect purity of love. Recently, two authors, beginning from altogether different viewpoints, have analyzed the progress of human love. One, Dr. Allendy,[1] looks at it as a physician and a psychoanalyst; the other, Jean Guitton,[2] studies it as a psychologist and metaphysician. The latter is a Christian, the other is not. Nevertheless, on one point at least, they come to the same conclusion: human love is subject to an internal law of development which has to set forth, progressively, by the very action of psychological evolution, its most disinterested aspect, which both call "the oblative forces of love." Thus love, even in its most carnal form of sexual love, tends by its own rhythm of growth to purify itself, and, may we say, to set forth its essence, which is the gift of self. Its very life makes it rise up and sing out more and more purely as love. The life of love is to become pure love.

We would like to show here that it is the same in another domain, that of the apostolic life and of that love which spends itself in action. The life of the apostle and his activities are subject, by very reason of their human growth, their psychological development and the rhythm of their action, to some profound transformation. A person does not approach action with the same courage at sixteen years and at sixty. That is a fact we must recognize, a law we cannot get away from. At first glance, this psychological transformation might seem without importance from the viewpoint of the spiritual life. One could even believe that it represents little more than a sort of progressive relapse of the energies of action, so lively at the beginning of the apostolic life, and at times so weakened at the end of it.

From this point of view, the ideal thing would be to maintain, all of one's life, the enthusiasm of a twenty-year-old. But how quickly that is shown to be unrealizable! It would be going contrary to psychological laws that are imposed on us and over which we have no control. It comes about then, that we become discouraged and end up considering a relapse fatal and spiritual progress impossible in the life of the apostolate, for not having seen, perhaps, of what the latter must consist. We would end up believing that from this side of the mountain, it is not possible to go all the way to the top, perhaps only because we have not discovered the road that leads up to the summit. There is nothing more dangerous for the apostle and for his action itself, than this sort of discouragement that threatens to take possession of him in the middle of his life, in this noontime when the limitations of human forces show up, when their decline becomes imminent and when confusion between the possibilities of man and the gifts of God risks bringing about the collapse of the ideal as well as the failure of dreams.

It is, therefore, a matter here of showing, after a rapid analysis of the different psychological stages of the apostolic life, that this very development of the phases of human activity normally calls for an increase and a gradual purification of our supernatural life. A purely human outlook would make us see a rise followed by a relapse, a development of action and of radiance, followed by a cutting back and an aging, youth followed by decrepitude. A supernatural outlook will show us that through this rhythm of human activity, God calls us to a continual progress, unceasingly accelerated, not only in love, but in action itself. But this progress is supernatural. It tends to set off the supernatural character of apostolic activity, in an ever-purer way. Also, it is from a viewpoint of faith that we have to discover and accept it, and it is in accept-

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ing it that we discover it. That does not come about of itself; it is an effort and an ascension sustained by grace.

A person has no comprehension of the progress of the contemplative life until he has grasped the fact that through all weaknesses and aridities, God calls the soul to a total giving and to a purer love in which He secretly reveals Himself, so that the void consented to by love becomes the supreme possession of the All. One has no understanding of conjugal life until he has realized that, through all its phases, from betrothal to widowhood, it bursts human egoism, eliminates the interested aspects of love, in order to bring one to the purer giving of self, for which is opened the way to a more spiritual coming together that nothing can again affect, with the result that separation itself completes and purifies intimacy. Likewise, finally, one does not understand the progress of the apostolic life until he has accepted, through all the phases of human life, through all successes and failures, the invitation of the Father to give himself more purely and to abandon himself more completely, in order to become in His hands the instrument of the world's salvation, so that the very suffering of the apostle becomes his supreme shining forth.

We do not here have to retrace the entire moral and religious evolution from earliest infancy to adult age. That has already been done. We should like to show how, in the different ages of life, from adolescence to old age, the apostolic ideal is envisaged and concretely lived. Doubtless, we will only be able to uncover some rather general characteristics. It would be quite impossible to go into details, which are individual and infinitely diverse. But we think that the general outline of development which comes to light at the completion of these analyses can apply to the majority of cases, and that the exceptions themselves, wherein the normal tempo is accelerated and at times transformed, will be able to make use of the spiritual trends that are educed from habitual progression, in order to grasp their proper destiny.

1. *Adolescence*

Very young children can already have apostolic initiatives that are at times astonishing. A certain orientation of devotedness, an authentic sacerdotal or missionary vocation, can be born in the heart of a little one, like a wonderful and fragile flower in the first days of spring. But the formed and definitive plan of consecrating oneself to giving Christ to one's brethren normally asserts itself during the course of adolescence, between thirteen and seventeen years of age.[3] It is at that moment that the personal project is uncovered, tried, and finally, made definite. That which forms the apostle is precisely that, in a supernatural light and under the influence of God, a young man or a young girl is unable to think of him or herself without seeing and wanting him or herself in the service of others in order to give them Christ. This presents itself in a thousand outward forms, sacerdotal vocation or vocation of lay militant, but at bottom there is this that is common: "My personal progress is to be the one who gives himself for Christ." Humanly, the adolescent chooses his vocation, chooses to be an apostle. Basically, it is God Who chooses him, out of love for him and love for them. He is moved by God and accepts this motion toward others; he is sent; he will be an apostle.

Difficult Choice

These easy-going formulas give a very faint idea of what this apostolic vocation can concretely be. In fact, it is almost always in the middle of a difficult struggle against other, more palpable attractions, that it presents itself. It is a choice, as diverse as environments and persons are diverse, between a certain project of human success, of temporal enjoyments, and the ideal of the only success that counts, saving men for eternity, and of the only joy that lasts, loving Christ and making Him loved. It is a preference given to the pursuit of this Kingdom of Heaven whose spiritual goods are only foreseen, over all the fleshly goods that surround us, attract us and flatter us. It is a victory of the spirit over the passions, an accepted inrushing of supernatural light which illumines for us the real blessings, a victorious impulse of love, a total confidence placed in Jesus Christ Who takes possession of this life in order to accomplish in it and through it, His designs of salvation.

One might readily characterize the attitude of this period of life toward future activities in a few words: it is the age of *the ideal, dreamed of and consented to.* In order that this formula might be valid, we would have to remove from the word dream whatever is pejorative about it. We should not believe that adolescence

necessarily shuts itself up in a vain reverie, separated from reality, though that might be a pitfall that awaits it. What characterizes this period is first of all, the conception of the ideal, the anticipation, in a certain intimate plan, of life's trends. A plan at once personal and social, a looking ahead to what one has to be and what one wants to do. Personality is defined, and already formed, in this sketch of the future.

Of course, the elements thereof are drawn from reality. We might easily discern the influence of the family environment, the attraction of great examples encountered, the call of the needs of the times. All that is put into operation by grace, which discovers its supernatural meaning. But this plan which takes possession of real elements, fashions them in its likeness and idealizes them. It is the privilege of this age not to be too narrowly determined as yet by the mold of concrete circumstances. It is already able to foresee all its possibilities, without having to choose among them. It has not had to prune the branches of desire in order to obtain the fruits of realization. It is above all its privilege to fashion the future. The plasticity of the future enables it to conceive it in its own way, and to conceive itself, in this future, in a beautiful way. Difficulties are of course foreseen, but these are imagined more than confronted.

The elements drawn from reality serve to give the value of something possible to that which the pressure of life and of grace bring to life. This imagined and ideal presentiment of what one wishes to do has not yet gone into the mold of the concrete. In this, the plan resembles a dream. It is that which often gives this age a somewhat presumptuous assurance with respect to the generations that have preceded it. It instinctively compares its ideals to their accomplishments. That makes it severe. If only it would be allowed to act and to command! It feels itself ready to transform everything. Certain people are shocked by these rather youthful words. . . . But it is on the whole a good thing that this is so. This role of idealizing the plan of life and action renders it more attractive to the feelings.

It is also the age of great enthusiasms. We must not make fun of them. In the lively and still subtle fire of these ardent desires the will is going to ignite and flare up. We must not turn aside from the law of the human being which wants the True to pass through the senses in order to reach the intellect, and the Good through the feelings in order to make the will fruitful. Here in fact, through these excitements of youth, great decisions are made. It is the age of total giving and of heroism. Through these images and these dreams, the call of God is heard and accepted. In the generous plans of the adolescent, the child decides to be a dedicated person. The apostolic ideal takes on the characteristics which give it its proper content and delineate its personal form. Long dreamed of, slowly matured, here it is at last definitively consented to. The apostle is ready for the departure.

2. *The young man*

This starting on the way is truly a stage of the apostolic life. This penetration of the ideal caught sight of and consented to, in reality presupposes the putting into operation of new faculties. The willed ideal becomes *the pledged ideal.* The plan becomes a reality. Whether it be to begin immediately the action of a militant, or to undertake the formation which prepares the apostle, it is necessary at this point to surmount the oppositions of the environment and the inertia of the old man. Such entrance into the period of accomplishing is a trial for the apostolic ideal. Some stumble right from the first step. Like those deceptive vehicles whose motor races as long as they are out of gear, but dies out as soon as one wants to start, we see some young people capable of vast projects and of generous words, but incapable of taking one step. One enters the seminary with enthusiasm, but comes out a few days later, disenchanted; another, who applauds the program of some movement, is unable to make any effort on its behalf.

At times, there is a crisis and it seems that there is retrogression. The initial excitement subsides. A new rhythm imposes itself which is not that of the feelings but of the will. It is necessary that the impetuosity of desires pass over into the regular and ordinary pace of humble daily reality. It is necessary to use the energy that a splendid plan generates to carry out very small things.

What a strange use God makes of these lively forces. In all this we have to understand, in a supernatural light, that this change of conditions is progress. If the initial drive passes into such a narrow channel, it is in order to give it more strength. And if the desire for

action is expressed in such small accomplishments, it is for an increase of love. Progress, because there is accomplishment; for it is here that the apostolate begins. It is in this lived obedience, in this active love, in this confronting of difficulty that it consists. It is not he who says, "Yes, yes" who is the apostle, but he who does the will of the Father in the Church for the salvation of the world. The first difficulties and suffering encountered are an occasion of exercising and increasing true love. There is more charity in accepting one hour of work in reality, than ten years in imagination. It is progress, too, because this becomes the sign that what is sought is not a plan of personal ambition and of self-promotion, but a plan of submission to the will of the Father. By this very smallness, we enter into evangelical greatness.

Such is the condition of the young man — a transitory condition. He feels it and he is eager to come to that adult age of full realizations for which he is made; for, throughout these difficulties, his primal project remains intact. The partly-seen ideal is always desired. Only it will take longer than he thought. In the course of his difficult way he is sustained by the great desires he is pursuing. He is straining toward the accomplishment of this plan which he bears in him ever since the decisive days of his adolescence, no part of which he has denied. His action has all the more gusto according as his few successes are for him already the foretaste and the precursory sign of successes to come, whereas his failures in efforts in which he is not yet completely engaged, serve him as experience for greater efficiency, and never fully compromise him. His forces are still intact. His ideals have become more defined by contact with reality, his experiences and his attempts have shown him his possibilities and traced for him the way of success. He is ready now to commit himself totally, with all his accumulated wealth, with his whole unified being, in an undertaking of salvation that will be his work, the work of his life and the fulfillment of his apostolic plans. Now he is capable of undertaking and of commanding; he is a man and a leader. The apostle is formed.

3. *The adult*

It would seem that henceforward a sort of equilibrium is established in life. In one sense, that is true, the soul does avoid the fluctuations of feeling, the changes of direction of an adolescence that has not yet fixed its path. Charity takes on form in an action that assures its stability. The love of God is nourished by the very difficulty of what one undertakes for Him. It seems then that the spiritual life advances in the very tempo of the development of the apostolic influence, and that it blossoms out while giving off its light. There would be progress, but in continuity, ascent but along the same lines. However, in the depths of the soul, at the very center where his apostolic vocation is formed, a new crisis is being delineated.

Now his progress will no longer take place in a continuous line, but according to a new interior movement and a sort of unexpected overturning of his perspectives of action. Because this crisis is generally unfolded more slowly than the crisis of adolescence and is often crystallized only after years of work, it is less noticed. Because it no longer goes on beneath the vigilant look of attentive educators, but at times in a great spiritual solitude and under the regard of God alone, its evolution has perhaps been studied less. And yet, because it reaches souls generously dedicated in order to purify them, because it results either in a growth which is an ascension onto a new level of interior life and a transformation in the manner of efficacy of action, or in a falling back, a sort of discouragement which is fatal as well to prayer as to the apostolate; because, in order to co-operate with grace, it is extremely useful to grasp spiritually the interior meaning of one's action, it is of the greatest importance to see, finally, in what this new phase of the apostolic life consists, and where that road begins which leads to new perspectives.

Painful Discovery

At the starting point of this crisis there is a discovery — an astonishing and painful discovery — the same one of which Péguy speaks in those unforgettable pages of *Clio* which he dedicates to the man of forty. "See," he says, "it is History that speaks, this man of forty. Perhaps we know this Péguy, our man of forty. Perhaps we are beginning to hear of him. He is forty, he therefore knows. The knowledge that no teaching can give, the secret that no method can prematurely confide . . . the instruction that no school can impart, he has. . . . First of all, he knows who he is. . . . But

above all, he knows that he knows. For he knows the great secret of every creature, the secret that is the most universally known and yet has never filtered through; the secret that is the most universally divulged and which has never passed from the men of forty past thirty-seven, past thirty-five, past thirty-three years, has never gone down to the men below. He knows that people are not happy."[4]

Let us not hear in these words the echo of an absolute pessimism. We know well enough that Péguy is the lyricist of hope, we do not take him for one disenchanted with life. It is rather the affirmation of a law of human growth, and the entrance to that narrow passageway which is the vestibule of the mystery of the second virtue.

Crisis in Maturity

Psychologists who study the depths of the soul have seen it. On their chart of the evolution of affectivity, they have indicated for all not only the crisis of adolescence, but the even more profound transformation of mature age. Here is man, at the middle of his life. Up to now all the forces of his soul have been tending ahead toward a plan to be carried out. This tension sustains his effort and maintains the dynamic equilibrium of his psychic life. The effort of thought and action in order to secure a position, to develop his business, to acquire a reputation, or a fortune. The impetus of the heart, in order to find a mate, to found a home, to develop his family, to raise his children.

Now his position is established; brilliant or mediocre, it has been obtained. He can see nothing more than the modification of details that do not change the essential content of his life. Already now its traits are fixed and its ultimate success or non-success mark them forever. People know, as in the case of a dead man, what he has been. His family has reached its full development in accordance with its human possibilities, and circumstances. His children are growing up with their riches and their limitations, and that cannot be changed either. They too, in their way, by their very presence, put their parents back into the preceding generation . . . into the past.

Thus come to his midpoint, he must now perceive all of life suddenly turning upside down, and before him the downgrade that leads to death. From the eminence of this instant which dominates the past and the future, his eye measures what his life has been. And indeed, it is necessary to note that whereas it has been all of those things, that is all it has been — irremediably so.[5] Therefore, at times the disproportion between the plans of adolescence, those long-cherished, ardently-pursued dreams, and this reality whose outlines are finally fixed, bursts forth. And, as human forces lack the power to change that, to make things over, there is nothing henceforward to polarize the forces of life, there is no more future, no project ahead to sustain the tension of effort.

The soul can no longer look its destiny in the face. It hides this fundamental disillusion from itself by distractions that cannot satisfy it. That is the risk . . . if this falling behind of human enterprises and the ebb of time do not lead to an abandonment of the spiritual life.

Secret, Bitter Failures

It is impossible to number and describe all the forms this painful, central intuition may take. There are as many as there are individuals. There is the spinster of forty who now knows that she will not marry and that forever, there will be lacking to her the support and the affection of a spouse, the crown of children of whom she still dreams. There is the young widow of forty, who knows that her life is ultimately frustrated and humanly broken by a separation which has taken from her a support, a tenderness, that she needed. There is the household which knows that it will not have any children, and that an immense tenderness, made to give itself, will remain forever unused. There is the sick man who, after the final relapse that leaves no further hope, knows that he will never be able to get married, or work like everybody else, or finally, to fulfill those dreams he has borne within him for so many years and toward which he has bent so many efforts and faltering steps. The bitter knowledge of the failure of dreams is the secret of so many hearts. Each one bears its own wound. These are things we cannot tell. And we have to reflect a long time before telling them to ourselves, for who knows whether he will be able to bear the terrible news?

This, which is true for so many others, will again hold true in a new and, so to speak, aggravated manner for the apostolic life. The

man engaged in action will experience this crisis especially as an apostle.

It is here in fact that the painful disproportion between the faintly perceived ideal and the fulfillments already achieved especially appears. Sometimes this revelation comes all of a sudden, as an excruciating shock; more often it comes about slowly, by the action of a whole series of experiences, which vary with each person as does life itself, and result in the same trial for all.

First of all, in a trial of personal life. Often, in the drive of initial generosity, and of a more sensible grace which lights and buoys up the beginnings of the spiritual life, sanctity seems near and almost easy. Difficulties are indeed envisaged, but they are represented rather than lived. Moral reforms are resolute, but they are foreseen rather than carried out. The atmosphere itself of the environment of formation, and a psychology of youth which leads to enthusiasm, render the illusion easier.

It is necessary to discover oneself slowly; to learn to measure the tenacity of interior oppositions, the subtlety and the snares of sin. Here are resolutions a hundred times made and a hundred times to be remade. Sin is no longer just something like a stain that we clean up, but alas, an impregnation so deep-seated that it seems to become one flesh with us, and to be able to disappear only with death. We may change environments, frames of reference and occupations; our sin is there, against us. It rediscovers itself, transforms itself, adapts itself. We may have dreamed of one day offering a perfect life, but here we can give only a sinner who each day measures, more and more, how much he needs to be saved.

Nevertheless, the adult is so strongly involved in his action that if the success of his apostolate were perfect, this failure of personal success would be easily masked. But most often it is in the domain of action that the bitterest disillusions await us. If we compare ourselves, not to an apostolic ideal already amputated by life and narrowed by experience, but to our initial ambition of shining forth, of conversion, of the transformation of souls, environments and institutions, what a waste! Action has forced us to cut back! Which one of us has not caught the saddened mien of the mature man when he hears young people discuss reforms to be undertaken, works to be created? We too had thought we would do great things . . . and here we have been at work for years now, and have fallen far short.

Now we have had the experience of the resistance of the environment. We do not know that when we have not acted. We make plans and believe that it is enough to will it in order for them to be carried out. We imagine reforms and think that it is enough to speak for them to enter into morality. We confound thought with reality, the plan with the edifice. Between the two there is a world to move, to raise up, to organize. It is heavy; sometimes it is crushing. It fights back.

To this resistance which comes from man is often added that which comes from things. We run up against economic conditions, physical miseries, political events, which are not dependent on us and on which hang the success of our apostolate. We feel ourselves seized, constrained, crushed, by an enormous and complex world of material conditionings, too heavy for us to be able to raise up.

Finally, it is perhaps the helps we could most legitimately count on, the support of friends and of leaders, that come to fail. We have not found the human understanding and the supernatural relationships we were hoping for. Where we were expecting a support, we find an obstacle. Our misunderstood plans stagnate and end up rotting with an odor of death. Thus, the man who had started out with such a fine impetus sometimes finds himself, after several y e a r s, disconcerted by events, deceived by other people, disillusioned with himself, strangely poor and alone. What are we to say if on top of this abandonment by men, there rests the silence of God? For at times it is true that Jesus Himself seems absent; we have to walk in this darkness, persevere in this void . . . but where are we to go?

Is it then necessary, someone may say, to set up, at the very heart of all apostolate a law of pessimism and a necessity for failure? No, of course, and we think that, on the contrary, an action well-thought out and courageously undertaken, must give some good results. If it were otherwise, we would have to question ourselves seriously. But if we have to formulate a law, it is that the more the apostle's life unfolds, the more accomplishments appear in their precise — and whatever their success, always limited — outlines, whereas the desire to save becomes more and more

swift and unlimited. Henceforth, a painful, gradually increasing contrast appears between the initial plan, the intention of an entire life, the germ of desire, the love which extends to all, and the action, the fulfillment, the life which has done so little good and for so few people. If there has to be a law, this is the law: that what man accomplishes is not in proportion to what he desires. We do not do what we should like to have done. The heart of an apostle is always larger than his action, and a dying Vincent de Paul can feel that he has done nothing.

4. *The old man*

What to say if we pursue experience unto old age? Let us speak of a beautiful old age, the kind which crowns a well-filled life. Activities drop off, one after the other; it is necessary to reduce one's sphere of action, to resign one's functions, to be replaced by younger people . . . to see one's ideas, one's methods, set aside for new formulas. Does a man have to give up being an apostle? To feel himself progressively diminished and useless? Humanly, it would seem so.

But perhaps that is only a human view of things, and perhaps, on the contrary, it is necessary for us to discover a center of supernatural perspective wherein the life of the apostle, through the deployment of his action, raises itself progressively toward a new mode of communicating the divine blessings. His radiance, far from reaching an apogee only to tend thereafter to decline, would be but a dawn whose light would grow impalpably greater throughout all of life, until the day of eternity. A new viewpoint this, which would permit us to go around the impasse in which we have seen action become entangled, and to come victoriously forth from this spiritual crisis of the adult period, not by consenting to diminution, but by accepting a purification.

[1] Dr. Allendy, *L'Amour,* Paris, Denoël.
[2] Jean Guitton, *Essai sur l'amour humain,* Paris, Aubier.
[3] Cf. Loret, *A quel age se decident les vocations?* in *Recrutement sacerdotal,* Jan. 1949. "The childhood vocation, without being disdained, must be considered a provisional attitude."
[4] Chas. Péguy, *Clio,* Paris, Gallinard, pp. 175-176.
[5] Cf. Chas. Péguy, *Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo,* in *Cahiers de la Quinzaine,* Oct. 23, 1910. "Forty is an implacable age. It does not allow itself to be deceived any more. It tells us no more stories . . . it hides nothing . . . Everything is unveiled, everything is revealed. Everything is betrayed . . . For it is the age when we become what we are."

Review of the Apostolate

Group Meets on Total Dedication

MORE than fifty priests and 175 laity and religious participated March 9-11 in the Midwest Conference on the Life of Total Dedication in the World at Loyola University, Chicago. The Conference was held with the approval of Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago. Rev. Joseph Haley, C.S.C., of the University of Notre Dame, served as chairman of the Conference which was concerned primarily with acquainting interested priests, religious and laity with the life of total dedication in the world, particularly in Secular Institutes.

Provision was made in the program for participants in the Conference to meet with representatives of the various Secular Institutes attending the sessions and to question them on some of the practical implications of a life of total dedication in the world. In the formal part of the program, the whole question of sanctity in the world, the theological and juridical structure of Secular Institutes and other similar pious associations of laymen, and the means of promoting this state in life among the laity were explored. The evangelical counsels, formal dedication by vow or promise, the rule of life and spiritual direction, and affiliation with an approved group of dedicated persons were treated by Rev. Stephen Hartdegen, O.F.M., of Washington, D. C.

Because of growing interest in this vocation within the Church, which has been encouraged by Pope Pius XII in his Encyclical on Holy Virginity and his Apostolic Constitution on Secular Institutes, conferences of this type were held this year on a regional basis in Louisiana, California, and the Midwest.

Although primarily composed of professional people who attempt to serve God in the world through their professions, Secular Institutes and pious associations have also been formed for a specific apostolate within the Church. For example, they also serve on a parochial basis, or in rural areas in the field of catechetics, or as auxi-

liaries of the Bishops in foreign mission fields. The variety of apostolic needs which these associations of dedicated laity can answer is seemingly limitless, as indicated by the experiences related at the Midwest Conference.

Father Haley, who has been issuing bulletins on Secular Institutes out of Notre Dame and who has been acting as a kind of co-ordinator of efforts in this country, said that a national continuation committee was established at the end of the Midwest Conference and that the groundwork was laid for drawing up a constitution for the guidance of future efforts to co-ordinate the national movement of total dedication in the world. Father Haley also announced that a collection of important papers on the life of total dedication in the world, culled from recent conferences, will be published by the University of Notre Dame Press in the near future.

In future issues of APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVES, the editors hope to publish some of the more significant statements on this newly developing vocation within the Church.

V. J. G.

YCW Leader Training Continues

APRIL will mark the beginning of the third three-month training school for leaders in the Young Christian Workers. Started in the Spring of 1955, the program is the first attempt of the Young Christian Workers to conduct full time training for young men and women who have had previous experience at the parish-section level of the Young Christian Workers.

Conducted at the national headquarters of the Young Christian Workers in Chicago, the Training School is under the direction of Russ Tershy, who has been active in the YCW the past eight years and who has served two terms as a national organizer of the YCW. Russ is assisted in his work by Jean Pew, former national vice president of the YCW.

Russ and Jean do extensive traveling in between training school terms to visit YCW sections across the country and to recruit students for their training program. Some twenty young workers attended the first two training sessions, and another fifteen will take the 1956 Spring course. Those enrolling in the program take leaves of absence from their jobs for the three month period of intensive training in theory and techniques of the YCW. At the end of the course, some of them come on full time as organizers for the YCW and are sent out into areas to organize. Others return to their home towns and jobs and devote their activities to strengthening the movement in their own local areas.

Russ and Jean view the training period as a time during which the trainees can withdraw from their local areas to reflect on their experiences and deepen their understanding of the fundamentals of the YCW as well as of the social doctrines of the Church. They require that trainees come only if they have had experience at the section level of YCW and preferably at the federation level, where this is possible.

While in training, the trainees participate in workshops, attend formal lectures, visit priests, work with sections in Chicago, organize new sections, set up study days, in general participate wherever possible in labor activities, and establish contact with other lay apostolic groups in Chicago in the field of social action.

They are trained in writing, speaking, leading discussions, conducting workshops, planning projects, and general organizational work connected with the YCW. They receive courses on the social encyclicals, labor history, parish sociology, the liturgy, theology of the Mystical Body, economics, politics and sociology. At the end of their training courses, they are tested both by written tests and by cross examination by a board of reviewers.

Russ Tershy has hopes that the YCW will be able in the future to establish an international training center for the Young Christian Workers and eventually to train American youth for mission work in foreign countries, particularly Asia, in developing YCW in under-developed countries of the world and in countries where YCW is in a position to combat Communism.

At present the YCW training school is still in its infancy, but holds great potentiality for assisting the growth of the Young Christian Workers here and abroad.

V. J. G.

Family Mission Apostolate

ASKING the question, *Why has not the world been won for Christ?* and stating their purpose to be to train a Catholic laity through participation in Catholic life, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Shelzi of Bacalar, Yucatan, said they were really bent on "working themselves out of a job." The Maryknoll priest with whom they work said,

"These lay people have done in three years what I would need twenty years to do alone."

Seriously, they see their apostolate to be that of witnessing to Christ's teaching by the example of Christian family living and their aim to train a native Catholic laity as the clergy aims to train a native clergy.

Joe and Therese Shelzi are college graduates from New York's St. John's University, Harvard, and the University of Honolulu. Therese spent a year in training at Grailville, Loveland, Ohio. Both have had journalistic experience on Catholic papers. Joe was one of the pioneers of the Kansas City *Sun Herald* some years ago. The couple spent their first year of married life in New Mexico, teaching in a parochial school among Mexicans in order to learn the language and the psychology of the people. Then they moved to Yucatan where with their three children and ten other Americans (three families, two single women and two single men) they form a Christian community among a primitive nomadic and jungle people.

They have established a credit union, a corn marketing co-operative, a carpenter shop and machine shop. They are engaged in what they call a fundamental educational program based on the underlying philosophy that doing things with an illiterate native people on a Christian plane and developing with them and for them a Christian recreational movement of plays, movies, and group conversations will bring about a gradual change in thinking and acting. They aim to "baptize" native customs wherever possible and give them a Christian meaning. For instance, about May 3 is a harvest time ordinarily celebrated with dancing and feasting. They have introduced the Rogation Day Procession at the seeding time.

Life is hard. They rise at five, sing Lauds and participate in a recitative Mass. They end the day with Compline. They live in a thatched roof house much like the native house, with mahogany furniture, the native product. Their food is that of the native: beans and the magnificent fruits of the tropics, supplemented with eggs from their own hens.

Among the women they have organized an Altar Society to make and care for altar linens and to make baptismal robes. The latter are worn with much pride. They are gradually getting marriages blessed. A Family Communion Crusade among a people which has not had the services of a priest for over a hundred years and among men who deem it unmanly to go to Church is a major project. Several liturgical plays have been staged and are on tour of the neighboring villages averaging six to ten families. These plays are enactments of the Gospel dramatizations of the Advent, Christmas and Easter Liturgy. They will reach about 3,500 souls served by ten outlying chapels.

If life is hard, Mr. and Mrs. Shelzi gave evidence of the fundamental joy that unselfish living and the Grace of God generate in souls. When their work there is ended, as evidenced by a native laity imbued with Christian principles and able to carry on unaided, they plan to return to the States, rear their family and at the same time establish a training center for other young couples who aspire to a similar work in other areas of the vineyard.

Sister M. Agnes Cecile, C.S.C.

Neighborhood Education Centers

THERE has been an amazing growth in the field of adult education during the last decade. Catholics may not be too well represented in this modern movement, but some of their contributions have been significant. Nothing, for example, in American history is quite comparable to the Catholic Labor Schools and surely the former Sheil School of Social Studies and other programs similar to it have left an enviable record in the history of adult learning programs.

Recently there has appeared in the Archdiocese of Chicago a bold experiment with neighborhood centers of adult learning. On July 11, 1955, Samuel Cardinal Stritch announced the formation of Adult Education Centers. In his letter to the clergy and laity he said: "Our Holy Father Pope Pius XII has pointed out this particular need (for adult education) and has called on Ordinaries in the Church to provide ample opportunities for the laity to study in their leisure hours these subjects, a knowledge of which contributes to their fuller Catholic life and more effective activities in the lay apostolate. Changes in our economic life have given more leisure, and a growing sense of their responsibility as Catholics has enkindled in many of our laity a desire for deeper knowledge and understanding of the teachings and life of the Church."

Adult Education Centers sponsors a program of evening classes for adults in five Chicago high schools: St. Philip, Alvernia, Maria, Mercy, St.

Gregory, and one in a suburb just north of Chicago at the New Trier High School. It has just completed its second eight-week term. About 900 adults have been in attendance to date.

Although the entire organization is directly responsible to the Cardinal Archbishop, it is, in the main, manned and administered by lay people from the Board of Directors down to the local grass-roots level. Another important characteristic is its volunteer nature. Except for a full-time director and secretary, the entire operation is in the hands of volunteers. This includes the faculty and a large committee system of local lay people who take responsibility for the promotion and operation of each of the neighborhood centers.

Although Adult Education Centers has not yet crystallized a program, but is letting experience guide it, it is committed to small groups, discussions and to a program of classes which will help the laity achieve a richer humanity and a closer identification with the Church and the world in which they live.

R. B.

Review of the Press

LITURGICAL PIETY, by Rev. Louis Bouyer, of the Oratory (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Ind., 1955, 284 pp., $4.75)

IN A BRIEF history of periods in the development of the liturgy and the liturgical movement, Father Bouyer selects for the "decisive turning point for the Liturgical Movement" the work of Dom Lambert Beauduin, a secular priest of Liege, Belgium, who worked for "eight years in an extremely active ministry" before retiring to a monastery. As he worked out a more complete understanding of the liturgy, Dom Beauduin realized "that the liturgy itself, properly understood, is the fundamental catechesis of Christian doctrine, and that its presentation is the means most capable of stimulating and feeding the highest and purest spiritual life. And he also realized that the liturgy itself, thus understood, is meant to be the well-spring of spiritual vitality and to provide the framework for Christian living, not only for individuals, not only for some Christians, but for the whole Christian people in the Church."

And in France, a few years after World War II, the liturgical movement got added stimulus from a group of secular priests who, because "they began their work in the milieux already prepared by Catholic Action, especially by the various Catholic Youth Movements, established it firmly in contemporary life."

I think Father Bouyer is saying two important things here: one is that the modern liturgical movement needs a laity and clergy active in the modern apostolate to realize the depths of participation possible, and the other is that this same laity and clergy demand a real participation in a meaningful liturgy for a foundation and expression of its action in other fields.

Both of these ideas are brought out in Pius XII's Encyclical on the Sacred Liturgy, *Mediator Dei:* "The holy liturgy, therefore, is the public worship which is offered to the Father by our Redeemer as Head of the Church; it is also the worship offered by the society of the faithful to its Head, and through Him to the Eternal Father; in a word, it is the whole worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, of the Head and of its members."

And we see these facts reflected still more clearly in Father Bouyer's own definition: "The liturgy in its unity and in its perfection is to be seen as the meeting of God's People called together in convocation by God's Word through the apostolic ministry, in order that the People, consciously united together, may hear God's Word itself in Christ, may adhere to that Word by means of the prayer and praise amid which the Word is proclaimed, and so seal by the Eucharistic sacrifice the Covenant which is accomplished by that same Word."

The meat of the whole book, then, is explaining this concept of the liturgy — and every phrase and word in the definition is meaningful — especially as it is contrasted with the concept of the liturgy expressed in the far more common definition: "The liturgy is the official form for the external worship of the Church."

Very briefly and imperfectly (for the whole book develops the Mystery view of the liturgy), the Mystery is God's total plan of redemption — the giving of His Word to His people from the first just man of the Old Testment to the last of the New Testament — and all participation in the Mystery is a participation in this single gift of the Word. God's Word is Christ, and redemption is His sacrifice on the Cross. All sacrifice is acceptable to God only insofar as it is united with the Cross — the Cross seen in the light of the Resurrection. The gift of the Word is God giving Himself to man in His creative fullness, and the fullness of that power is shown most fully in the Cross. . . .

> And now that God's Word has been spoken in its fullness, now that God's creation through that Word has been brought to its full accomplishment, what is still to be done during the last ages of human history in which we are living, except to hear and to be replenished by the fullness of its creative power? . . . The liturgy makes us hear God's Word in Christ, and it makes us experience in our own lives the power of that Word of God as it is shown forth in the Cross.

Experiencing that power in our own lives — living a full life in the liturgy — answers the great need of a spiritual formation or spiritual life especially suited for a laity actively engaged in the work of the Church today. Is it enough that lay apostles have great zeal and willingness to sacrifice for the Church, a basic grasp of dogma, devotion to the Blessed Mother, the Rosary or the Way of the Cross? Bouyer answers:

> The grace of Christ cannot be separated from His Person; His life *in* us is not a different thing from His life lived *among* us and *for* us. . . . Let us say once more that the grace of Christ cannot be separated from His Person, and that we cannot have His grace except by means of some actual participation in what He did on the Cross.

And, of course, there is no "actual participation" in the Cross except through the Mass and Sacraments. But, he says, there is no need to oppose objective and subjective piety, no need to contrast the liturgy with the individual's response to it. Referring again to *Mediator Dei*, he says the Holy Father "shows clearly the fundamental necessity of the objective element in the liturgy, but he also shows that it has no end in itself apart from the formal, and therefore subjective, response of the faithful, including the full and methodical use of both intelligence and free will."

In one of the final chapters Father Bouyer points out that devotions outside what is strictly liturgical were unknown until the Church had lost the common people's understanding of and participation in the liturgy; and therefore,

> What we should rather do is apply the very wise and tactful program of *Mediator Dei;* that is, never try artificially to suppress any practice which has in its favor the example of great saints and the unmistakable fruit of spiritual vitality. Instead, we should try, gently and yet firmly, to bring such practices back to the norm of the authentic liturgy, to permeate them with its spirit, and finally to develop into an auxiliary of the liturgy what originated as a substitute for it.

So if we are to have an intelligent laity participating fully, or at least not superficially, in the life of the liturgy — then are we to expect that there will be more drastic changes in the externals of the liturgy, as we have seen recently? Consider the changes within even the last five years — many resulting directly from study and requests of lay groups or clergy working with such groups — the permission to use English in certain parts of the administration of Sacraments, first the Easter Vigil restored and now all of Holy Week, the increasing practice of total participation through sung or recitative Masses and Offertory processions, new Eucharistic f a s t regulations, evening Masses — and so on. Will a rejuvenated living of the liturgy inevitably result in many more changes?

The whole orientation of *Liturgical Piety* is away from the formula of renewal equals reformation.

> For if the stubborn rejection of the Church and the world as they are today were held to be the necessary preliminary to any authentic liturgical renaissance, this fact in itself would certainly constitute the most perfect condemnation of that renaissance . . . the liturgy belongs to the Church; let us, then, take it just as the Church of today has treasured it for us and as she offers it to us; let us try to know it, to understand it, to carry it out *as it is*, as perfectly as we can. Let this work suffice for us now; when we have done our best to accomplish it, then will be the time to see whether there is also something further to be attempted.

Probably much *will* be attempted; but in our eagerness to participate more fully in the Mystery, we must not too quickly adopt liturgical practices of another, more God-centered age, unless those practices would also be more meaningful for us today.

Doubtless there are minor points of inaccuracy or statements or opinions in *Liturgical Piety* which could be questioned (Rev. Josef A. Jungmann, S.J., points out some in a review

which is, however, very favorable); but the book has already been hailed by liturgical specialists as a masterpiece. Next to their praises, I can add mine — that there is a great deal of value for the ordinary layman in the book. Certainly, it is not an easy work to assimilate; but neither is it tied up with technical terms so that only someone trained in the field of the liturgy can understand it.

A recommendation given to me which I think has much merit, is this: that the last two chapters, on the relation between liturgy and our life of piety and between liturgy and our life in the world of men, should be read first by anyone who is starting his first deep study of the liturgy. These chapters, summarizing the Mystery in practical applications, would be sure to hold the reader when the difficulty of the matter and the fine distinctions which are made may tempt him to believe that his present vague understanding of the liturgy must be enough to get by with. Knowing what are the conclusions, he will be more than willing, I think, to spend a little more time in the study of principles leading up to the conclusions.

A. A.

CHALLENGE TO ACTION

MONSIGNOR JOSEPH CARDIJN

The writings collected together in this book will, we hope, give a clear idea of the mind and spirit of the founder of the Young Christian Workers. The reader will be struck by the dynamism, enthusiasm, the freshness of vision of the man. In a period of the Church's life which is marked by a new development of the lay apostolate, he stands out as one of the most significant figures of modern Catholicism.

When Father Cardijn started his first small group over thirty years ago, he said to them: "We are setting out to conquer the world." Today the Y.C.W. International has become a reality. It takes its place among the great world organizations. Established in sixty-four countries of the world, this Catholic youth movement now numbers more than a million and a half young workers.

Challenge to Action is the first collection of Cardijn's major addresses to be published in English. It has been edited by Father Eugene Langdale, a long-time friend of the Young Christian Workers in England.

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APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVES

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THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH

MONSIGNOR GERARD PHILIPS

In this book, Monsignor Philips clearly formulates exact theological principles concerning the role and place of the laity in the Church.

In his discussion of the laity's role in the temporal order, the author makes a penetrating study of temporal values. He also sheds light on the frequently misinterpreted doctrine of the priesthood of the faithful and on the relationship of the laity to the magisterium.

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Editorial

IT IS fitting that the first issue of APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVES carries two articles on the mission of the Church in today's world and on the mission of the laity in today's Church. Certainly, these two broad themes will characterize this quarterly review in one way or another each succeeding issue.

The subtitle of this quarterly (which replaces *Anima*) is "A Quarterly Devoted to the Apostolate of the Church." We have thereby extended the goals of *Anima* to include the broad field of the apostolate of the Church. *Anima,* we felt, had become too identified with the specialized movements of Catholic Action. In making our change, we have taken our cue from Cardinal Stritch, who placed the specialized movements in the context of the apostolate of the Church last summer when he addressed the Young Christian Workers and the Christian Family Movement at Notre Dame.

Our new title also bears comment, for it was chosen with much deliberation. The word *anima,* meaning *soul,* was selected some six years ago when this review had its beginnings under Rev. Louis J. Putz, C.S.C., at Notre Dame. It originated as a publication for priest chaplains and religious assistants working primarily with the Young Christian Students. Through the years, *Anima* matured under the leadership of Father Putz into a review very similar in scope to APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVES. What we have done now is merely to bring the title up to date with the contents. It was also Father Putz's suggestion that a layman edit APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVES — again to show a growth in the thinking of the Church regarding the role of the laity.

As the one so honored to carry on Father Putz's work, I want to append a note at this time on the thinking behind such a review as this. We who have been associated with the lay movements the past ten years have recognized the need for a review which would reflect on all the many happenings in the lay apostolate.

These varied happenings of the past decade will most assuredly remain as a kind of unconnected series of events in the Church unless they are somehow reflected on in a mature way. Once subjected to reflection, these events can then become genuine apostolic experiences for all of us. Our formula, then, is simple. Events plus reflection equal experience. It will be the purpose of APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVES to apply the formula to apostolic events.

Perhaps genuine religious experience in our period of Church history will come from this deep interiorization of the great events taking place today all along the missionary fronts of the Church. Happily, zealous lay men and women are in the midst of it all; it may be their unique privilege to enjoy this new kind of religious experience brought about by deep involvement as Christians in these modern problems. But to have the experience, we must not simply be caught up in these events, but we must think about them, learn from them, and make them a part of ourselves. Then shall we be able to move onward to new missionary fronts.

The editors believe no review presently exists to help us do this. We hope APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVES meets the need. And we invite your prayers and your participation.

Vincent J. Giese

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